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SENSITIVE
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: INCOMING FOREIGN MINISTER DENG ALOR WANTS TO IMPROVE
SUDAN-US RELATIONS

REFERENCE: (A) 07 KHARTOUM 2053
(B) KHARTOUM 1

¶1. (SBU) Summary. CDA Powers met with newly sworn-in Foreign Minister Deng Alor on January 2 who said that he wanted to improve Sudanese-U.S. relations. Deng offered GoS assurances to work together in the investigation of the killing of the U.S. diplomat and his Sudanese driver. Also with the aim towards improving Sudanese-U.S. relations, Deng said he would facilitate visas for U.S. staff and for congressional delegations and wanted to avoid any negative consequences stemming from the recently signed divestment law. Separately, CDA Powers met with State Foreign Minister Al Sammani Al Wasila who repeated that the GoS wanted to cooperate in the investigation and that he wanted to ensure the killings do not put Sudanese-U.S. relations in a negative light. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) On January 2, CDA Powers and poloff (notetaker) met with newly sworn-in Foreign Minister Deng Alor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs American Affairs Desk Officer Ambassador Abdel Basit Badawi Al Sanousi, and Counselor Muawia Eltoum Elamin. Deng, who had only been sworn in as Foreign Minister on December 27 (ref A), said that he was just becoming acquainted with the portfolios but wanted to highlight a few issues and get into the details at a later point in time. FM Deng Alor requested the meeting on December 31. His Office Director stated that the FM wanted to ensure that his first meeting with the diplomatic corps be with a U.S. Government representative in view of the USG's efforts to promote CPA implementation and address the crisis in Darfur.

¶2. (SBU) Deng said that now that the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) has returned to the government, he wanted the embassy to know that his ministry wants to improve Sudanese-U.S. relations. He said that when he asked for the appointment with the CDA shortly after his swearing-in, the divestment legislation had not yet been passed. Now that it has been signed, Deng said he wanted to work together to avoid its implications and noted that the U.S. has always played a positive role in Sudan.

¶3. (SBU) Noting the January 1 killings of the Sudanese employee and American diplomat (ref B), Deng offered his condolences to the family of the two Embassy employees. He said that he had spoken with President Bashir on the incident and that the GoS was willing and ready to cooperate in its investigation of the killings. He also noted that he communicated this to African Affairs Assistant Secretary Frazer and said that he had told her that if the Embassy

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encountered problems to let the ministry know.

¶4. (SBU) CDA Powers thanked the Foreign Minister for his condolences and said that the embassy would indeed need the Ministry's

cooperation and facilitation of visas for a number of teams that would be coming to Khartoum to assist the embassy on security issues and in providing counseling and other assistance to staff, both American and Sudanese, as a result of the killings. For example, Powers said that speedy approval of visas for the Regional Medical Officer and several security officers will be needed. As far as improving bilateral relations, CDA Powers noted that authorization of visas to a U.S. congressional delegation led by Congressman Payne at the end of the week would be a first opportunity to demonstrate the Government's willingness to promote dialogue. He further stated that a visit by the new Special Envoy to Sudan Richard Williamson would another opportunity to pursue dialogue. In response to the FM's declaration that the Sudanese Government was desirous of sending a Parliamentary delegation to the US, Powers stressed that the embassy would work with Washington to facilitate such a visit once a list of visitors and other details are provided. Finally, responding to Deng's concerns about the divestment law, Powers said that the embassy took pains to ensure that the signing of the bill by President Bush would not come as a surprise to the MFA, which was why Powers had briefed the Acting Director of the America Desk the day before. He further stated that the Administration had been opposed to the legislation and did not support passage of the bill.

15. (SBU) Powers raised the issue of the New Embassy Compound (NEC) construction and stated that we were disappointed that there had been no progress on this issue due to continued failure to grant customs clearances. Deng said that the GoS had a number of ideas on the NEC, and would like to have another meeting to address this issue in detail.

16. (SBU) As for the issue of the upcoming congressional delegation, Deng responded positively saying that "we need to encourage visits." Deng said that he will follow-up on the visas after getting the files from the interim Foreign Minister, but said that visas should not be a problem. As for the Sudanese Parliamentarian visit, he

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said that State Department assistance to ensure that the delegates obtain appointments with Congressmen would be most helpful. He said that the main issue is that the U.S. and Sudan needs to have a dialogue, and he had said as much to Assistant Secretary Frazer.

17. (SBU) Separately, CDA Powers met with State Foreign Minister Al Sammani Al Wasila, at his request, who commented on the shooting of the U.S. diplomat and his Sudanese driver, saying that the shooting was not in keeping with Sudanese culture which frowns on hurting people and stresses mutual cooperation. He promised "we will find out what happened and who did this and will spare no effort in this investigation." Al Sammani said that the media was using the killings to create a distorted and negative picture of Sudanese-U.S. relations. "We want to refrain from giving a negative interpretation on this incident." Al Sammani requested that his condolences and those of his Government be conveyed to Washington and to the family of the deceased USAID officer.

18. (SBU) Comment: In leaving the Foreign Ministry, CDA Powers found himself before a lectern and well over 20 media representatives eager for an interview. Powers stated that the meeting had presented an opportunity for the USG to extend congratulations to the Foreign Minister in his new function, and thanked GOS authorities for their cooperation and efforts in investigating the tragic deaths of two USG employees. Post takes to heart the statements made by both Deng and Al Sammani that the GoS wants to improve relations and work to avoid the potential negative consequences of the Sudan Divestment Act, but time will show their seriousness.

POWERS